

B. Claims

Please cancel claims 8-10 without prejudice or disclaimer and amend claim 1 as follows. A complete listing of all the claims appears below; this listing replaces all earlier amendments and listings of the claims.

1. (Currently Amended) A printing apparatus which divides a printing area in a scanning direction on a printing medium into a plurality of regions and has a print buffer for storing ~~raster~~ column data corresponding to the divided regions of a predetermined column amount, ~~a size of the raster~~ a column amount of the column data stored in the print buffer being smaller than ~~a size of image~~ a column amount of column data to be printed by one scanning, comprising:

input means for sequentially inputting block data corresponding to the divided regions and having a plurality of ~~rasters~~ compressed raster data;

acquisition means for acquiring N-bit raster data from the block data input to said input means by decompressing the compressed raster data;

conversion means for converting the raster data into column data;

transfer means for sequentially transferring the raster data acquired by said acquisition means to said conversion means;

second transfer means for sequentially transferring N column data converted by said conversion means to the print buffer;

storage means for storing the N column data transferred from said second transfer means in the divided regions of the print buffer; and

control means for executing transfer processing of said transfer means, transfer processing of said second transfer means, and conversion processing of said conversion means in synchronism with a predetermined signal.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the block data contains a plurality of color component data, and the divided region is further divided into second regions in correspondence with the number of color components.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the block data contains a code representing a data delimiter between first color component data and second color component data.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said acquisition means outputs a second predetermined signal to said conversion means when the code is determined.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said conversion means comprises holding means for holding N raster data transferred from said transfer means, and performs longitudinal/lateral conversion processing after said holding means holds the N raster data.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said conversion means comprises holding means for holding N raster data transferred from said transfer means, and when the second predetermined signal is input while said holding means holds M ($M < N$) raster data, sets (N-M) "0" data in said holding means and then performs longitudinal/lateral conversion processing.

7. - 10. (Cancelled)